

"THE WEAKNESSES OF THE COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP"

by

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before

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INTRODUCTION

President Stewart, ladies and gentlemen of the American Association of
Land Grant Colleges and State Universities:

I thank you for this opportunity to tell you some of the responsibilities of
the American intelligence community during these troublous days.

The first job I had after graduating from college was as a teacher in
India. While this was longer ago than I like to recall, it still leaves with me a
keen appreciation of the vital importance of your work. The land-grant colleges
and state universities have had a deep influence on America's educational
system. You represent the heart of America.

The task of an intelligence officer during these days is no easy one. To
say that the world is in ferment is to put it mildly.

The free world -- and in particular the countries we include among the
Western democracies -- face, on almost a world-wide basis, problems such as
these: (1) Revolt against the last vestiges of colonialism, (2) Uprising within
the satellite states of Europe against Moscow domination, (3) The all-out

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attempt by the Communist Bloc to sell its theories and its wares throughout what we call the uncommitted areas of the world, and (4) The conflict between the Free World and its program of building up a society based on the principles of freedom and the attempt by the Communist Bloc to make over the world in its image.

These and other issues have deepened into acute crises in Poland and Hungary; in Egypt and other Arab states.

The role of the Central Intelligence Agency is to try to gather together the facts -- particularly the facts on these crisis situations -- and to lay them before our policy makers. These included, in particular, the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and others as they may have a role to play in dealing with our foreign and national security problems.

This Agency is one of the newest of the permanent Agencies of the government. I say permanent because it is established by a law of a permanent rather than provisional character -- namely, the Act which set up a Department of Defense, provided for the Unification of the Armed Services, and set up the National Security Council. With the complexities of the modern world and the multiplicity of our national security problems, the Agency has and, I believe, will continue to have for the foreseeable future, a very definite and essential role to play in our government structure.

It is probably inevitable, but unfortunate that in the public mind the name "intelligence" should become linked with the story-book concept of the cloak and dagger. Frankly, I regret that such sensationalism should ever becloud

the main and vital function of this Agency. This function to coordinate the work of finding the facts in the international situation without bias or prejudice, and to make those facts available to others in our government that have the infinitely difficult task of charting a policy which will make for peace among nations, help to build prosperity at home and abroad and raise the standards of living and the levels of understanding among peoples.

When I mention that it is our duty to try to find the facts of the international situation, this statement may seem clear and simple. In fact, it is infinitely complex in execution.

Facts have many facets.

One type of facts, for example, relate to what we colloquially call "hardware."

By "hardware" we mean the physical assets a particular country may have. For example, as applied to the Soviet Union, it would mean the size of the armed forces, their equipment, particularly in modern strategic weapons such as aircraft, guided missiles, atomic stockpile, and the like. To know what this constitutes and its disposition within the Communist Bloc is one type of fact.

Closely related to this, and another important fact, is the over-all industrial potential of a country like the Soviet Union.

Then alongside the hardware comes the more difficult assessment of technical competence of the leadership and of manpower. How good are Soviet aviators? How able are Soviet scientists? How well organized is the Soviet

government machinery?

Then we come to an assessment of another and more difficult type of fact to analyze: namely, what are the basic intentions of a particular country, how is it likely to react in a given situation.

To our policy-makers the intentions of a country in a crisis may be more important, and always more difficult to ascertain than the amount of its hardware, and its over-all military might.

Let me illustrate what I mean from a fairly recent and greatly debated issue of about six years ago - namely, the intervention of the Chinese Communists in the Korean War in October of 1950.

I can speak about this from an entirely detached viewpoint since at the time I was in private life and an outside observer of events.

At that time it was well known to American intelligence and to our policy makers approximately how many troops and how much equipment the Chinese Communists had close at hand north of the Yalu River on the borders of Korea. Thus we knew about the "hardware" element. We could also judge within a reasonable margin of error how long it would take these particular troops to intervene in the North Korean struggle.

What we did not know with any assurance was whether or not the Chinese Communists would risk actual intervention and war with the United States. Under these circumstances the intelligence officer has to weigh the pros and cons, to cite all indications of physical preparations and of probable courses of action and to reach an overall estimate of "intentions". In fact, in retrospect

I think that my predecessors presented a competent analysis of the situation (though they did not call all the shots).

In the various crises which face us today we have many problems of the same nature. Again we know with reasonable accuracy the hardware which the various contestants in the Middle East have available to put into the struggle if the uneasy cease-fire should be broken. In the case, for example, of Hungary, we knew what forces the Soviet had available and approximately where they were located to throw into that country to put down the spontaneous uprising of those brave people if the Soviet finally elected, as they did, to take the course of ruthless repression.

What we, in intelligence, are constantly seeking to learn are the motivations and the ambitions and the pressures affecting each country whose actions might threaten our own national security and what these pressures may impel a particular country to do.

Today I shall try to analyze some of the perplexing problems which the men in the Kremlin must be facing, and some of the weaknesses of the Communist dictatorship.

An intelligence officer has no business to be either a prophet of gloom or a congenital optimist. It is all too easy to be over-impressed with Soviet strength and military might if we look only at their war-machine and become bemused with a supposed infallibility because the Kremlin can act more swiftly than countries with representative forms of government.

Certainly it is as important to know the weaknesses of an adversary as it is to point up its power and strength.

I am reminded of a story from World War I days when things were going badly with the Western Armies in France in 1918. One of the civilian leaders of the Allied Government called a meeting of some of the top military leaders in France and tongue-lashed them furiously for mistakes he alleged had been made by the military. (Very possibly he was only trying to cover up for civilian mistakes.) When he paused for comment a General Officer at the table said philosophically, "Well, all I can say is they have Generals on the other side, too."

Often when we, in the intelligence community, are about to produce a paper, showing that the Communists in Moscow are working to carry out some imposing blueprint for foreign or military policy, they pull off a bureaucratic bungle or make some fantastic move that would put in the shade the mistakes made by governments in the free world.

I am inclined to say to the pessimist, "We have to remember that they are human beings on the other side, too." And here it is also well to remember that, by and large, the policy makers in the Kremlin, able, astute and ruthless as I admit many of them to be, have less inherent knowledge of the outside world than their opposite numbers in any of the major governments of the world.

Sometimes I feel that the men in the Kremlin have little real understanding of the temper of the free world. We rightly say that a little knowledge is a

dangerous thing -- it is vastly dangerous when it comes to appraising the reactions of the other countries. Here Moscow is dependent, for the most part, not on first-hand knowledge or understanding of the outside world, but on reports received from their representatives throughout the world whose freedom to criticize and advise is limited by the interest they have in protecting their jobs and possibly even their heads.

The military might of a dictatorship as we learned both from Hitler and Stalin is a formidable thing, but if we take the same test of long-range political acumen, their power has definite limitations.

During the last two years of World War II, I was stationed in Bern, Switzerland, and from there had some opportunity to look behind the facade of the Nazi dictatorship. As long as everything went smoothly in the military field in the early war days, this dictatorship looked invulnerable. As soon as the first blows came against their over-extended position, rifts began to appear. While actual dissension was kept down by an iron hand, it boiled under the surface and erupted in the 1944 attempt on Hitler's life. The essential ruthlessness and consequent instability of their course of action began to be apparent.

Now, as the historians are able to turn more light on this situation and to analyze the mass of documented material we have about the Nazi regime, we see that it had within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Dictatorships have a rigidity which gives the false effect of strength. The democracies have

a flexibility which sometimes appear a source of weakness but which can stand blows and react in a way that is impossible in dictatorships.

The Soviet Union, over the past year and more, apparently started some moves to temper the rigidity of the Stalinist type of dictatorship.

When the history of this period is written I imagine that historians will agree that the most important document to see the light of day in the year 1956 was the famous Secret Speech of Khrushchev delivered at the 20th Party Congress on February 25, 1956. The text was published in the free world some three months later. The people in the Soviet Union have never had this text given them over the Soviet radio or in the Soviet press. They have had little bits and pieces here and there about Stalin's crimes and misdemeanors but have been largely kept in the dark while millions of people throughout the free world have had the full story.

Here is one of the weaknesses of dictatorship. They dare not tell their own people the truth. In the modern age where even with the millions of dollars the Soviets spend on jamming foreign radio broadcasts, they cannot keep the truth out. Some, but unfortunately not all, of the facts banned by the Soviet government eventually reach the Soviet people.

Also, when they send their people abroad, even though generally under careful control, these travellers nevertheless bring back information to others.

When a people begin to discover that their leaders are not telling them the truth, the seeds of mistrust and lack of confidence are sown. These may

breed slowly, but they do breed surely. Similarly the Russian people have been told none of the real facts of the Soviet ruthless repression of Hungary. Some day, too, the real truth of this situation will seep over the borders to them.

It was a great gamble that ^{Nikita}~~Nikita~~ Khrushchev took when he denounced Stalin and the crimes of the Stalin era. His own fulsome praise of Stalin must have been in the minds of the Soviet people. What can one think of a leader who for years was the trusted lieutenant and the recipient of the favor of the Stalin whom he later denounced as a deviationist and murderer. When a dictatorship deliberately turns upon and degrades its former dictator, it is by that very fact undermining itself.

In essence the Soviet leaders, frightened at the consequences of Stalin's policy at home and abroad, tried to ease the iron grip of the Stalinist police dictatorship and ~~to try~~ to give to Communism some of the surface attributes of a decent way of life.

They hoped in this way to win for the Communist system a greater degree of willing consent of the governed at home and a degree of political respectability to attract new supporters abroad. This is in a nutshell what the latest "new look" and "de-Stalinization" policy is all about. Superficially this seems to be an astute policy. There is no doubt that it has constituted a subtler threat to innocents abroad who like to think that Communists are solely interested in the welfare of people whose friendship they cultivate.

I say this is a great gamble, however, because Khrushchev and his colleagues are trying to repudiate Stalin and the unpopular characteristics of

Stalinist rule without relinquishing the monopoly of power enjoyed by Stalin's heirs in Moscow or abandoning control of the great neo-colonial empire built up on the European border of the USSR.

This points up the real dilemma which dictatorships are always facing. A dictatorship as the term implies means that you tell people what they are to do and you enforce the doing of it. Khrushchev proposed to relax that a little bit at home - to have an 80% dictatorship but in that 20% margin to allow the people some liberty of action and thought. This raises the basic question as to whether you can have a partial dictatorship.

True, we have heard of benevolent dictatorships, but there the authority of the Fuhrer or leader remains complete but he only exercises that authority in such a benevolent way so as to keep his people temporarily satisfied.

Any relaxation of the iron authority, and that is what in effect may have been contemplated under the so-called "new look" in the Soviet Union, raises great problems.

These problems are even more serious in the satellite area where in effect an alien rule was foisted upon brave, proud people with long traditions of Western culture and with an intense yearning for freedom. A little relaxation of freedom in the Soviet Union where after all Russians were ruling Russians was a very different thing from ^{using the same tactics in} Eastern Europe, where Russians were ruling peoples who were once free and came to be dominated and controlled by a hated foreign power.

The consequences of the relaxation of Soviet dictatorship in Hungary has been poignantly pointed up these last few days. The Hungarian people were not content with half liberties, qualified freedom. The prospects frightened the Kremlin and caused an abrupt reversal of policy, with consequences that it is hard to estimate.

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In ~~crushing~~ the Hungarian revolution the Kremlin in effect repudiated an official declaration which the Moscow government had made on the 30th of October. This followed Hungary's first bold bid for freedom which Moscow apparently accepted. The Soviet government said that it was necessary to make a statement in connection with events in Hungary. It admitted serious shortcomings, expressed deep regret that development of events in Hungary had led to bloodshed. It admitted that the further presence of the Soviet Army elements in Hungary could serve as a cause for even further deterioration and stated that the Soviet government has instructed its military command to withdraw the Soviet Army units from Budapest as soon as this is recognized as necessary by the Hungarian government. It agreed to negotiate the whole question of the presence of Soviet troops in the territory of Hungary.

It seemed that a miracle had happened, that what the pessimists had always predicted was impossible, had occurred. It seemed that an uprising of people largely unarmed could prevail even over tanks and modern implements of war, **not** because the revolting people were stronger, but because no butcher could be found who would dare use all the might of modern weapons to crush a people rising in wrath and seizing freedom with both hands.

When dictatorship was thus put to the test, undoubtedly the men in the Kremlin who debated the issue reached the conclusion that their control not only in Hungary but throughout the whole Soviet domain was at stake. There was a complete reversal of their short-lived policy of tolerance. All promises made were broken. The dictatorship became a dictatorship again, not

benevolent but ruthless. If this is any guide to what may happen in the USSR, we may be back again to the days of ruthless Stalinism.

But it is not alone in the satellites that dictatorship is put to its harsh test. In the Soviet Union itself they have a long-range problem which goes to the very heart of their ability to keep dictatorial control in the hands of a few men in the Kremlin.

In order to compete with the Western world in the field of science and industry which was vitally important for their economic growth and their rearmament program, it was essential for the Soviet to speed up the education of their people, especially in the scientific and technical field. After Stalin's death the regime encouraged more objectivity in scientific inquiry, and put on the shelf some pseudo scientists such as Lysenko. After all they had found out early in the game that in the present nuclear age one could not fool around with scientists who tailored their art to the whims of Marxism.

Here we immediately see that the Communists, in escaping one difficulty were necessarily running into another that may be of even greater dimensions in the long run.

Obviously, the Soviet leaders could not limit their educational processes to the scientific fields and more and more young men and women are graduating from schools, which correspond to our high schools and colleges, and are taking advanced degrees comparable to our degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. Even with all the indoctrination in Communist teaching which they give to their young students, it is impossible to prevent education

from developing the critical faculties which every thinking human being possesses.

Education is a most dangerous drug for dictators, and Soviet leaders may be creating a situation in the USSR which eventually -- not tomorrow -- but sometime will cause pressures for further liberalization of political life, still less police coercion, greater economic benefits for the Russian people, and more effective consultation of the wishes of the governed.

Some 18 months ago, on June 1, 1955, in an address at Columbia University, I did some speculating about the dilemma which the Soviet was then beginning to face as a result of the broadening of their education system and then suggested that "man's desire for freedom must break any bonds that may be placed around him" and I ventured to make this prediction: "In introducing mass education the troubled Soviet leaders have loosed forces dangerous to themselves. It will be very difficult for them henceforth to close off their own people from access to realities of the outside world."

I concluded: "A hard choice faces the perplexed, and probably unharmonious, group of men in the Kremlin. They lead a people who surely will come to realize the inevitability of the great precept: 'And Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free'."

It is knowledge of the truth that a dictatorship cannot tolerate unless of course the truth happens to be all favorable to them. That rarely happens.

We have seen instance after instance of this. Only those foreign publications are tolerated in the Soviet Union which they approve or which,

being of a technical variety, have no bearing on the great political issues of the day. As I mentioned before they have done everything possible to prevent foreign broadcasts from reaching the Soviet people. Today there are a thousand jamming stations in the Soviet Union.

But I believe it can be truthfully said that in the modern age dictatorship is fighting a losing battle in trying to block all the avenues through which truth permeates to the farthest corners of the world.

As we review the events in Hungary and Poland and elsewhere in the Soviet Orbit we find another weakness of a dictatorship which many even in the free world did not anticipate.

I suspect that the leaders in the Kremlin felt that the relatively long period during which they had held and indoctrinated their people had inured them to follow and obey without question the dictates from Moscow. For almost 40 years now the Soviet system has controlled the USSR and for 10 years or more they have held the satellites under iron discipline.

During all this time the new generations have been indoctrinated year by year in Marxism and Leninism with an overdose of Stalinism. Their Bibles have been the writings of Marx, Lenin and, until recently, Stalin. They have been largely cut off from the outside world. Under these circumstances how could the younger generation -- and it is among the youth especially that revolt appears -- have known anything about freedom and liberty? How could they aspire to new and different and better things when they never had tasted and enjoyed them?

But in fact, by their ardent pursuit of freedom, youths in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere are disproving the Kremlin's confident expectation that, as Dostoyevsky had written, "Tyranny is a habit capable of being developed, and at last becomes a disease. The man and the citizen disappear forever in the tyrant."

We now find and can take infinite encouragement from the fact that this theory is false. Over recent years it has been the youth who have defected from tyranny to freedom. It has been the youth who have risked their lives and sacrificed them in order to achieve a freedom that they never have enjoyed but which instinctively they yearn for and are ready to die for. You will recall the young Polish aviators who have flown their planes to freedom in the West. There was a group of young men who recently seized a Hungarian plane and brought it to safety in Germany. It was youth and those who toiled with their hands who sparked the movements in Poland and in Hungary and it is youth and the workers who manned the barricades in the streets of Budapest, as well as soldiers who would no longer serve an alien master.

The gravest danger which a Communist dictatorship faces today is the uprising of youth against tyranny. No amount of Communist indoctrination and Marxist education has served to alter the basic urge to assert the right of free expression.

A few human beings it is true can be brainwashed and lose for a time any sense of right and wrong; and the desire to assert themselves. One thing you

cannot do is to brainwash a whole nation.

If we go back through history to the earliest times we will find that the most distinguishing feature of man is the instinctive revolt against tyranny, the instinctive longing for liberty.

If a dictator fails to recognize and yield to these forces, in time he will fall. And yet if he does answer this call, in the long run the liberties he may grudgingly have given will prove his undoing.